

# INDIE POWER MAGAZINE

ISSUE #1



  
**iamagamer**  
games for all, by all  
*Interview with Kimberly Voll*

## The “Shmups” Issue

The last month has consisted of working on the magazine, contacting developers, hearing from our audience, and getting some great feedback, both on what people like and things that we can improve. It was a bit overwhelming at first, but we looked over it all and fixed a few things in the last issue, as well as improved things in the issue you’re staring at right now.

Making this magazine is a blast, even though it can get tiring at times. People reading the magazine fuels our desire to keep it running, and we had some great numbers with the last issue - getting over 1,000 views the first week, thanks to our fans who reblogged and promoted us around the indie community. Thank you so much for that, and we hope you continue to help us get the word out about this magazine.

Issue 1 is the “Shmup’s Issue”. What is a “Shump”? It’s short for “shoot ‘em up”, which are usually top down shooters, where you fight off wave after wave of enemies, dodging their attacks while trying to get rid of as many as possible at the same time. Shmups have different sub-genres, such as “bullet hell”, depending on the style and difficulty of the game. Shmups started with **Spacewar!** for early computers in the 1960’s, and have evolved over the last few decades, creating games such as **Space Invaders**, **Galaga**, the **Beat Hazard** series, and **Score Rush**, to name a few of the more known Shmups.

Although shmups don’t make up many of the games we’re reviewing/previewing, other parts of the magazine follow the theme, including the What You Can Learn article and poll. With that being said, we hope you enjoy this issue, and help us create even better content to come.



**BRET HUDSON**

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### ***Woah, this is a lot shorter than the last issue!***

I procrastinated quite a bit for this issue, and during the last week I realized I had way too many articles to write and deliver, so we've pushed some of them back for the next issue. Quality over quantity!

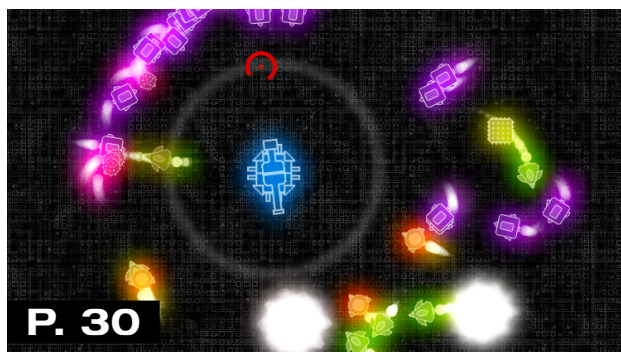
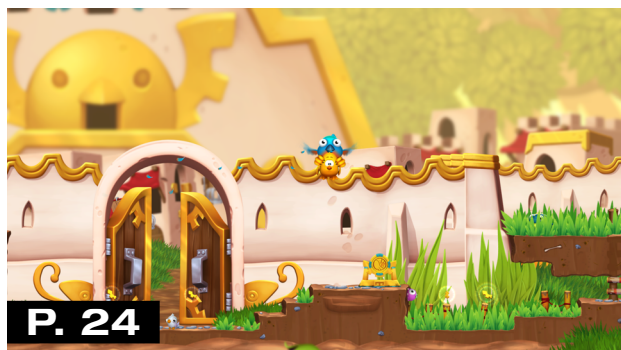
# 20 PREVIEWS



Published by  
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# REVIEWS

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## ABOUT INDIE POWER MAG

First and foremost: if you aren't already, we highly recommend enabling 2 page mode for your PDF reader, with cover mode on. This magazine was designed to be viewed as if it were an actual printed magazine. Adobe Reader is easy to set up:

1. Enable *View->Page Display->Two Page View*
2. Also enable *View->Page Display->Show Cover Page During Two-Up*

We're only covering the way to do that for the most common PDF reader, however, if you use another PDF reader, Google search should be able to help you find out if the reader has two-page capabilities.

### *How was making this issue?*

It was actually quite a bit more stressful than the last, even though we had extra time. Things started to pile up towards the release date, and making sure the issue came out on time was a priority that struck fear into me. We cut out some content and made it shorter - we believe in the quality over quantity rule. All the articles that were cut will be written up and put into the next issue, so if you were promised a review, don't fret it, it's on its way! Maybe the next issue will be even bigger than the last!

### *Still going solo?*

Sadly, this issue was a solo effort. We got a few emails regarding potential writers, but only one of them has been keeping in contact. She's been having troubles getting the game she's reviewing to run on her PC, so she isn't featured in this issue. However, the team size is finally more than one, and we can use all the extra help we can get - even if it means each person only puts out an article or two a month.

### *Is the magazine still going to be monthly?*

It seems like it is a very possible goal to continue the monthly release schedule, with our next issue being out August 17th. We hope we can keep the magazine's on par quality wise while maintaining this release schedule.



# THE UNNAMED PAGE

We really don't know what to call this page. We wanted it to be a community page where we'd post people's reactions to the magazine and emails they send us, but we're still deciding exactly what it's going to be used for. Copying and pasting feedback from the forum seems a bit silly at the moment. We modelled the page after Game Informer's Feedback section, but it just doesn't seem that it's the best fit for the magazine. Hopefully in the future this page will become more interesting and colorful.

We'd also appreciate it if we got some feedback and opinions about the latest issue. If you'd like to write in and talk about the magazine, or a particular article, send an email over to [feedback@indiepowermag.com](mailto:feedback@indiepowermag.com). We'll also be pulling quotes from forums where the magazine is posted.

Next month's theme is puzzle games, and we'll be posting the new poll online on Monday at [indiepowermag.com/poll](http://indiepowermag.com/poll). Check it out to vote for your favorite indie puzzle games!

## FOLLOW US ON



THE LAST MONTH

# in INDIE GAMING



Dennatron Games (Jonatan Söderström and Dennis Wedin) announced a sequel to the 2012 hit Hotline Miami, in which the player gets phone calls hiring him to go out and murder whole apartments and houses full of people the mystery person wants to be taken out. The trailer for the new game, which can be found on **YouTube**, shows plenty of gore, killing, and even more excitement, giving it potential to be even greater than the original. The sequel was planned to be DLC, but Dennatron Games decided it would be best to make an actual sequel to the game. However, there will only be one sequel, unlike many game series nowadays.

So, think DLC is consuming the games industry? Well, it's finally spread to movies - with Indie Game: The Movie Special Edition. For an extra \$5, fans can upgrade their movie to the Special Edition, featuring over 300 new minutes of content, including epilogues and short films. "Indie Game: The Movie Special Edition is another 3 film's worth of stories, crafted by the directors of the original." The Special Edition comes out Wednesday, July 24th, nearly a year after the original movie came out. The wait is over - go grab your own copy over at [www.indiegamethemovie.com](http://www.indiegamethemovie.com).



The OUYA released June 25th, following up with mixed reviews about the console, some saying it'll never live up to other consoles, is a piece of crap, or promotes piracy. However, there are a handful of good reviews too. While some backers still haven't gotten their kits yet, the ones that have reassure that the wait is definitely worth it. With approximately 70,000 kits out there in the wild right now, the OUYA is taking its first steps towards what could be a bright future or a terrible downfall. Only time will tell if the console lives up to its dreams.





The iamagamer female protagonist jam happened last weekend, spanning the weekend of July 13th. More than 250 people participated were made for this event, with 158 of the participants on site in Vancouver. With people jamming, chatting, and testing out technologies such as the Oculus Rift, everyone had a blast in Vancouver. The jam started off as a response to the game industry's reaction to female protagonists, and founder Kimberly Voll quickly got the attention of gamers worldwide to participate in the jam. Our interview with Kimberly Voll can be found on page 16 where we ask her about how she feels the jam went as well as where she plans on going next.

Many more jams happened over the course of the last month, ranging from the GameBoy Jam to the No Future Jam. Check out a few of our favorites below:

GameBoy Jam: [www.gbjam.net](http://www.gbjam.net)

No Future Jam: [www.oujevipo.fr](http://www.oujevipo.fr)

Molyjam: [www.molyjam.com](http://www.molyjam.com)

Robot Day 2013: [www.newgrounds.com/collection/robotday2013](http://www.newgrounds.com/collection/robotday2013)



THE OUYA \$1M

# FREE THE GAMES FUND



OUYA's Kickstarter was a phenomenal success, regardless of how well the console has been received, and the company is trying to set things right by allowing their success to be passed on to the developers who want their games to come to the console. Any developer who wishes to participate in the OUYA "Free the Games Fund" have a chance to earn up to \$350,000 in funds to develop a game for OUYA. Developers are required to set up a Kickstarter and reach at least \$50,000 in funding. OUYA will match *EVERY* dollar donated - yes, that means you'll be receiving twice as much as you raise on Kickstarter. Not bad, 'eh? The cap for the amount OUYA will double is \$250,000, which is a REALLY big amount of cash. There are some restrictions, such as the time period in which developers can take advantage of the opportunity, which is between August 9th of this year and August 10th of 2014. Another requirement is to have the game be OUYA exclusive for six months, with complete rights to the game afterwards to do whatever you wish with it. To read more about the exact requirements and guidelines, as well as some more fine print, check out <http://www.ouya.tv/freethethegamesfund/>.

“Developers, we've set aside **one million bucks** to turn your ideas into a reality. It's our way of giving back to the platform that helped us make OUYA a reality and to rewrite the “rules” of how a game console is brought to market. Kickstarter was our beginning—here's hoping it's yours too. ”

# O U R O P I N I O N S

OUYA's helping indies out by providing funds? That sounds absolutely fantastic! It's a great move by OUYA to get more great games to the console. The move, however, has both ups and downs.

Many developers are hearing about this opportunity and it sounds almost too good to be true. Raising \$50,000 is a great feat, and to be honest, is a bit much for many indie games, unless they're of a very large scale. Recently Kickstarted game **The Stomping Land**, a huge, 3D open world full of dinosaurs and other players via online multiplayer had their goal set at \$20,000. They ended up raising \$115,000, which would have been enough to be eligible for the funds, but the goal wasn't even half of what OUYA expects the games to raise. Many indie games, such as Zak Ayles' **Lioness**, are only looking for much lower sums of money, in his case \$7,000. That's still a good chunk of cash, but compared to \$50,000, it sounds insignificant. How realistic is it for these games to have a successful Kickstarter and raise that much money?

Let's do a little math. A game could raise up to \$350,000.

Well, that's just from OUYA's side - meaning they'd have raised over half a million all together. Lowering both the goal stated in the last point as well as the maximum money allowed seems much more reasonable. Hypothetically, four games could take all the money. The \$100,000 "prize" for the Kickstarter that raises the most money seems like a cool incentive, but is also a bit silly. Whoever gets the most money gets even more. It's probably also part of the \$1 million, meaning there's "only" \$900,000 available for the games, and once that's reached, then it's out.

OUYA is most likely having the goal be such a high amount so they can attract bigger projects. However, amping up your games and making them huge isn't always the best. While we hope OUYA can pull in some bigger games to attract a larger audience, we hope they change the guidelines up a bit to make sure they don't exclude smaller developers who just want to make small/medium sized, fun games. Overall, we hope the competition (?) goes well, and we see some great games form and be successful thanks to the opportunity.



THE OUYA \$1M  
**FREE THE  
GAMES FUND**

# DECLARE YOUR INDEPENDENCE!





# PIXEL PURGE

The land of Pixel Purge features some fantastic examples of what makes a shmup perfect. With a large array of characters, upgradable abilities, fantastic visual effects, and a glorious leveling curve, Pixel Purge stands high in the list of indie shmups in terms of being fun and an absolutely exhilarating experience.

Pixel Purge is a shmup that is too easy to pick up, and too hard to put down. How come? There's a few answers to that, but we're just going to focus on two of the answers, with the first one being the upgrade and leveling system. It powers the whole game. Let's take a step back and analyze how the whole system works.

First, players destroy the enemies, which put out "pixels" for the player to obtain. These pixels increase the experience bar, which, once full, increases the player's level, giving them two points to spend between eight different attributes: critical hits, piercing, regeneration, magnetism, pixel count, score multiplier, bullet count and bullet speed. Every time you upgrade an attribute, it takes an additional skill point to level it up again - meaning a level five skill requires five skill points, which would take three levels to achieve. If the player wants to continue increasing a certain skill, they will be forced to go extra levels without increasing any of their other attributes, putting them at a slight disadvantage. Keeping your skills balanced and not underpowered is a challenge brought by the game's system, and is all due to personal preference and play style.

Pixel Purge doesn't have stages - the game keeps going until you die. New enemies are added every time you level up, increasing the difficulty until you can't go on any more. There's a thousand different ways to play the game, based on which abilities you choose to upgrade each time you level up. Different combinations will allow you to have an advantage over your enemies in different ways, such as leveling up bullet speed to the max allows for a stream of bullets, while maxing out bullet count allows you to create an arc that shoots bullets in a 60 degree area.

The fact that the game practically resets itself every time you die actually adds onto the replay value (as long as you don't ragequit when you die). This allows the player to try out new combinations of upgrades. The vast possibilities keep the player wanting to try out more, and experiment with certain combos to maximize their play length and beat their prior high score or max level. When you really think about the game, and

strategize, each upgrade has its ups and downs, and some are more useful later in the game rather than in the beginning.

Take the regeneration skill, for example. You don't really need to worry about your health early on in the game because the enemies are still easy (unless you really suck). Later in the game, when you start battling harder enemies, you'll want to be able to get your health back faster since you'll keep dying over and over again. Pixel count is another ability I usually wait until later in the game to increase. The enemies increase in difficulty when you level up, so it makes sense to upgrade other abilities so you'll be stronger when these new challenges appear. Further down the line, though, you'll want to level up faster and faster, to keep upgrading your abilities for the increasing task of blowing up the pixel filled beasts, meaning it's time to max out the pixel count attribute.

However, if you do decide to wait later in the game to upgrade a certain ability, it'll be harder to max it out since you'll need five levels of experience (10 skill points) to level it up to level five, and another three levels (6 skill points, only 5 are required, though) to upgrade it one final time to max it out. The game is fun on its own, not thinking in depth about the upgrade system, but after a while, it's almost impossible to not think a bit harder on what attributes you're upgrading and when, to maximize efficiency in destroying enemies and staying safe.

If the developers would have made it so every upgrade cost 1 skill point, it wouldn't be a challenge at all to max out all the stats, nor would it require much strategy. You'd just choose which ones you want to upgrade first, then move onto others. With the system they have in place, not only do you have to decide what would be best to upgrade, but also how you can keep your ship balanced by distributing the points somewhat evenly, and keeping from maxing out abilities to keep the skill points available for multiple upgrades. Upgrading a skill from level 5 to max requires 5 skill points, and if you have five level 1 attributes, you could upgrade all five of them once. The simple system becomes quite complex when you dissect it, and that's what makes it so beautiful.

Enemies themselves are also directly linked to the upgrade system. Each time the player levels up, the enemies do as well. It's the perfect balance, and even

though the system stays the same, the game changes every time due to the different combinations talked about earlier. Not only do new enemy types appear, ranging from one direction enemies to annoying purple blobs that follow the player, but the enemies themselves get bigger. There's 3 or 4 different sizes (perhaps even 5) for just about every enemy, and they continue to get bigger as the player's level goes up. They're the same exact enemy, just harder to avoid with the extra size and speed. A perfect way to reinvent and reuse existing mechanics within the game, which is a goal most games should strive for.

This is a great transition into our second point of what makes Pixel Purge so fantastic: the enemies. Like we stated earlier, they are linked with the leveling system, increasing in variety and size as the player collects pixels to upgrade his or her ship's skill set. Having enemies that are diverse and interesting are essential to making a good game. If all the enemies attack and are defeated the same way, just having different skins, gameplay becomes rather dull and the player uses the same strategy for all enemy types. By introducing new obstacles through the form of enemy types, the player has to change how they navigate and react to being attacked, and in the case of Pixel Purge, how they upgrade their attributes (I swear, it powers *everything* in the game).

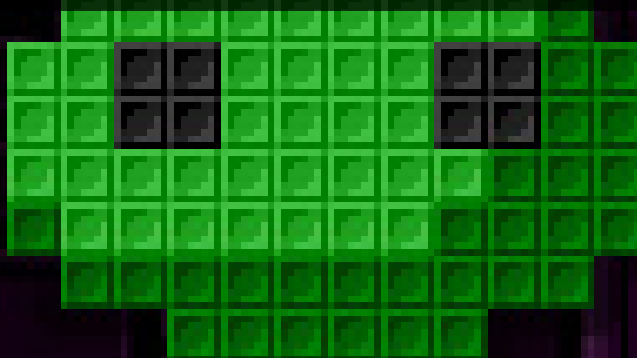
While this isn't applicable for all shmups, I really enjoy the fact that Pixel Purge is a bit more laid back in the beginning - not many enemy types in the game actually come after you. Most are just enemies that move in one direction, acting as a moving bomb. Not a single type of enemy in the game actually shoots at you, other than the orange enemy, which shoots darts upon exploding in 8 directions, which isn't technically shooting at you. This gives the game a unique feel, but once the levels start racking up, new enemies types such as the purple enemy show up, with one goal in mind: "let's go touch that pretty white ship, shall we?"

The enemy types get much more interesting than

that, though, with my favorite being the brownish "sacks" that follow you. They're slower, and don't seem like much of a challenge. However, if you shoot it, a super small purple enemy bursts out of the sack. Shoot it again, another one comes out. Destroy it, and you have anywhere between 25 and 100 little purple pests chasing you to the corners of the world. By destroying the enemy, you've created an even bigger problem for yourself. You've just increased your odds of being destroyed! Those little pests are so hard to hit, too, making it infuriating having them chase you around.

Another type of enemy in Pixel Purge is designed with a similar concept in mind. Blue boxes that pulsate outwards to hit the player are fairly easy to destroy. However, destroying it breaks it into four smaller pulsating boxes. The boxes also move in a diagonal fashion, making the playing board even more hard to navigate around. Think about player risk vs. reward when designing games, because it makes everything even more interesting.

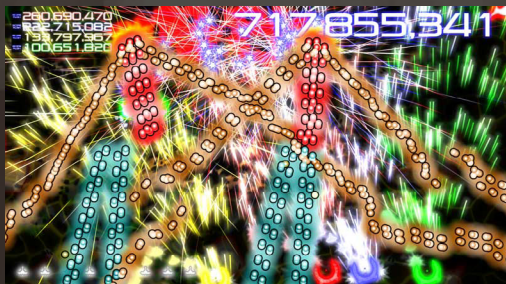
Why do I like that the game doesn't have enemies that shoot at you? It makes it feel like it's *your* fault you died, not the game's. You ran into too many enemies, or cornered yourself in an impossible to escape situation. Perhaps you didn't upgrade your abilities well enough to defend yourself against the increasing hordes. Like we've stated in previous What You Can Learn articles, it's good practice to make the player feel like they've made the mistake, because the player can always improve what they do. They can keep trying. If it's the game literally dictating whether or not they move on based on impossible situations will discourage the player. However, many shmups do just that - such as bullet hell games. They keep the bullets coming and coming until your brain practically overloads itself. Pixel Purge does a great job doing what it does, and should be looked at closely when designing other shmups, as there's some great lessons that can be learned from the game and its contents.





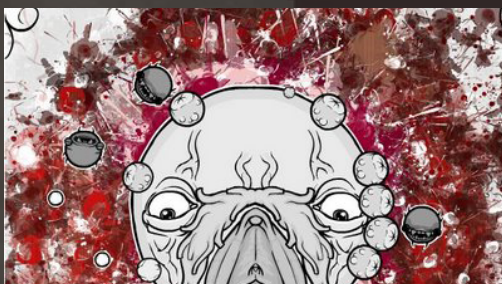
# Top Indie Shmups of All Time

This poll didn't go as smooth as our last one, so many of your favorite shmups might not have made it to the list! Make sure it doesn't happen again by participating in future polls.



## #10 - Score Rush

A 4-player shmup that's played with two analog sticks for the Xbox console, as well on mobile devices and computer systems. Features some of the craziest bullet patterns you'll ever have to survive.



## #9 - The C Word

Edmund McMillen and Florian Himsl made one of the most disturbing shmups I've ever seen, in which the player controls male genitalia beating the shit (pun completely intended) out of female genitalia.



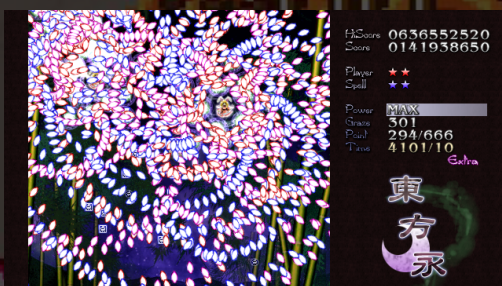
## #8 - Retro Blaster 3D

A 3D arcade styled shmup that has 3 difficulty levels, each with the goal of surviving as long as you can in the difficult blaster. The exhilarating speed and approaching enemies is guaranteed to keep you on your toes.



## #7 - Vatn Squid

Ted Lauterbach's pumped out a few different shmups, and Vatn Squid follows his strange style of games. Vatn Squid was made in 48 hours as part of the Game Jolt Weekend Jam back in February 2010, with contributors Heatex and IceWave.



## #6 - Touhou Series

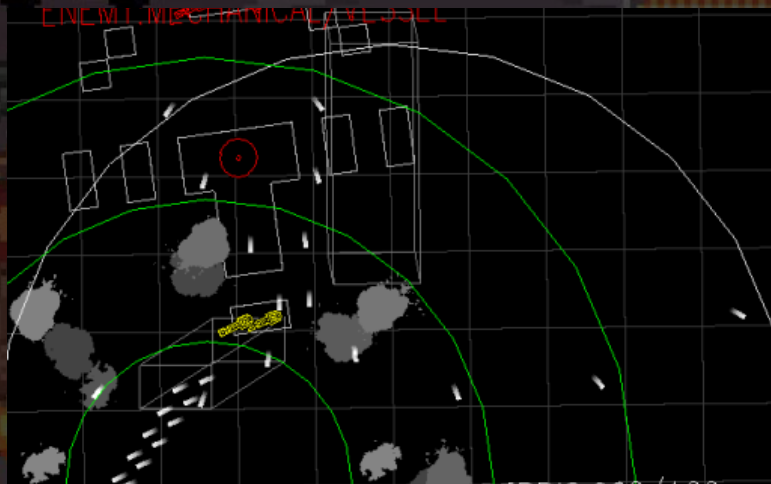
Touhou is a "doujin game", which is fairly close to an indie game. Doujins are made by Japanese hobbyists or groups known as "circles." The Touhou series has at least 14 games, and is exactly what comes to mind when one thinks of a bullet hell shmup. The other thing that comes to mind is "oh @\$%."



## #5 - Beat Hazard

Beat Hazard is a gorgeous shmup available for iOS, Android, PC, Mac, Linux, PlayStation Network, and Xbox Live Indie Games. Allowing you to import your own music, gamers can jam to their favorite songs while playing single player, or the online and offline multiplayer features.





## #4 Clean Asia

A vertical shmup by “Cactusquid”, aka Jonatan Söderström, created for a competition in 2007 at shmup-dev.com. The unique shmup allows you to use enemies against themselves and to collect debrees from destroyed enemies. The work was a finalist in the 2008 Independent Games Festival in the “Excellence in Visual Arts” and “Excellence in Audio” categories.



## #3 Sake Express

A hybrid of a fighter and a shmup, Sake Express is unlike anything else you’ll ever see, both content and graphics-wise. In order to be victorious, the player must fight to the death with pandas, cats, and super heroes using moves the player possesses as well as power-ups found throughout the stages.



## #2 Pixel Purge

Also the title in our “What You Can Learn”, Pixel Purge is a masterpiece of a shmup (well, it’s my favorite, so I have to make it sound absolutely fantastic, right?) with tons of upgradable specs on your little ship, and a world to get lost in for hours on end. Too many late nights have been pulled off playing this game when I should have been writing English papers instead.



## #1 Sake Express 2

Oops, did we put Seizuredome’s screenshot on this game? That’s because Sake Express 2 is a decompiled version of Seizuredome, with Zak Ayles’ graphics put over it as an April Fool’s joke. We didn’t know that when we got the list of games for the poll, but now we do. We also love how everyone went with it, and voted so much for it that it won first place. The game’s basically a sumo game with gun, as original game by Jonatan Söderström describes.

# BOOK REVIEW



Community Experience Distilled

## The Game Jam Survival Guide

Build a game in one crazy weekend and survive to tell the tale!

Christer Kaitila

[PACKT]  
PUBLISHING



Back when we still ran indie(Magazine);, we reached out to a Ludum Dare-r named Christer Kaitila, also known as McFunkypants, who had recently released a book named "The Game Jam Survival Guide." We contacted him regarding the book, asking if we could get a review copy for the magazine. Christer was happy to send us a copy, but sadly, the review was never published due to indie(Magazine); ultimately failing. Now, in Indie Power Magazine, we are able to bring you our review of The Game Jam Survival Guide - which is a fantastic read for any enthusiastic jammer, pointing out the do's and do not's of making a game under pressure.

Along with just over a dozen other jammers, Christer composes what is the perfect guide to game jamming, for both newcomers and veterans alike. The book is separated into 6 chapters, each documenting helpful tips and guidelines to follow during the period of the jam the chapter follows. The six chapters cover pre-jam, the first 12 hours, 13-24 hours, 25-36 hours, and the final 12 hours, as well as post-jam. As you may be able to tell, the book is written using the Ludum Dare time period of 48 hours, which is a common amount of time found in game jams around the world.

During the entire read, which took me about two hours, while briefly checking into the Ludum Dare IRC time and time again, I kept having flashbacks to my experience with Ludum Dare. The information brought forward through the book is very accurate, and explains exactly what to expect in a game jam. From the surveys to personal recollections scattered through the read, a developer should have a very strong grasp on what to do when their time comes to join their first or next jam.

Even though the chance hasn't come yet to put the book to use, it would have been nice to have read for my last jam, as it was a nightmare. The useful tips and guidelines for each part of the jam is essential in making sure your game doesn't go to hell halfway through the jam, and also helps keep a realistic mindset throughout the entire experience. Many jammers are over enthusiastic and bite off much more than they can chew, which this book addresses almost too well.

Two fictional characters, Baby McFunkypants and Lee Taxxor join the huge list of contributors who put in their own two cents on what to do during jams and what to avoid. The two characters are opposites, with Baby McFunkypants always doing the best choices while Lee tries to do the impossible and idiotic choices. The other

contributors include previous Ludum Dare winners and game jam organizers, offering more advice than you could ever imagine.

If all of that isn't enough for you, the book also has a lovely compiled index with lists of game jams, engines, tools, and community links to help you on your journey. While most of these are known very well throughout the indie community, it's still a nice addition to the book, allowing readers to get all the information in one spot.

Just like popular documentary Indie Game: The Movie, upon completing the book, a sense of adventure is found, and all that goes through the mind is "must make game, must join jam, games, jams, peanut butter." Not only has Christer written what could very well be the Bible of game jams, but also a moving piece which keeps hope alive through the challenge of making a game in a super short time period, and guarantees you'll survive to tell the tale.

////////////////////////////////////

Christer is a frequent jammer, running One Game A Month and participates as a moderator ("and enthusiast, cheerleader, jamvangelist") for Ludum Dare. Check out the following links for more of his work:

Personal Site: <http://mcfunkypants.com/>

One Game A Month: <http://onegameamonth.com/>

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***Check out the giveaways page for a chance to win a copy!***



# INTERVIEW WITH KIMBERLY VOLL

I AM GAMER FOUNDER

*We'll try to start from the beginning. You started the iamagamer jam due to the gaming industry's reaction to female protagonists. What exactly was your goal for the jam, and do you feel you've achieved it or at least made a step in the direction?*

Kimberly: My initial goal was really just to make a point, that the market doesn't support games featuring strong, female lead characters was a crazy idea and that we had a lot of people (both players and developers) who felt otherwise. I think the response and the number of games made have done a great job of showcasing that people feel very strongly about having games with female lead characters. My other goal, as the idea matured, was just to increase awareness of these sorts of issues... that this sort of thinking still persists in the industry, and that there are ways in which we contribute to sexism unconsciously and oftentimes innocently, through the way we joke, or refer to folks, or even how we personally identify. I wanted folks to start to look inward at how they might be contributing, and to start to think about how we might bring more balance to the world, and what that would look like. I think we really started to achieve some momentum with this event, which has me very excited

*What do you (as well as others) plan on doing with this momentum next (either in the near future or later on)?*

Kimberly: I want to continue to get the word out there about what we did this past weekend, and showcase the games that have been made. I wouldn't mind continuing to keep the conduit open, inviting folks to keep working on games featuring strong female lead characters. I hope that we can eventually get to a point where events like this make no sense, where gender is no longer an issue... instead we just can concentrate on making great games with awesome characters, and have the gender split just naturally balance out because

they issues are no longer there, but we're a long ways off of that right now, so I think we need to stay vigilante and continue to increase awareness

*Do you feel the same separation is present in other forms of media, such as books and movies, and do you think they're doing much to neutralize the imbalance?*

Kimberly: I feel like games are a ways behind other media. Not that they're perfect, but books and television seem to have more balanced representation. Movies perhaps less so, while games are shockingly behind. Being able to cite 10 games with strong female lead characters (and often they're questionable examples) does not make up for the 100s and 100s (probably 1000s) featuring men.

*Do you have any idea why games are so much farther behind?*

Kimberly: That's always such a tough question-- I think there are just so many forces at work, such as the outdated perception that games are still only played by men. Historically that may have been true, an artifact of a male dominated computer culture that emerged in the 70's and 80's, but around 50% of game players are female now. Some are starting in casual games, but many others enjoy casual games and more "serious" games. So the balance is shifting, but industry is far behind. Another reason is that if the perception is that this is the way the market is, large, risk-averse companies are going to speak to whatever will net them back the most money on a game-- because these days if large publishers don't make enough money on high-production value games, whole studios just disappear.

*How do you feel the very rare female protagonist game does in terms of having a female character? Recent games that come to mind are Tomb Raider, the Final*

*Fantasy XIII series, and Remember Me.*

I think a great game is a great game.... Remember Me, for example, was a good game. Tomb Raider... well, that's still not the best example, but I want to give credit for the designers as I do think it has matured a great deal and Lara Croft is becoming a complex and real human being, which is great. I haven't played FFXIII yet, so I can't speak directly to the game, but I know lots of people that really like it. I think the big thing to keep in mind is that there is nothing about gender that makes or breaks a game... as I say, a great game is a great game and should be celebrated. But publishers have this idea that someone a female character will make a male feel someone emasculated, or that they won't be able to "connect" to the character... maybe for some folks that is the case, but by the same argument you can say that women won't connect with all the male characters. What I want to see is a greater diversity of awesome games out there. I don't seek to demonize the existing content-- like I say, we should celebrate great games, and there are A LOT of awesome games out there with guys as the lead characters. But the problem is when I can count the examples of great games with female leads on one hand, and the rest exist as lopsided, ridiculous caricatures, most of which are hyper-sexualized. Where's the balance? (I should note that I don't think, in principle, that one-sided characters, parodies, or even sexualized characters are a bad thing-- they are PART of that diversity; it's just when those are predominately all we have) Kimberly: and you can see the trepidation of publishers there, perhaps... the need to include that to almost off set the risk. I'm just speculating, of course. I really want a world where people can feel free to make whatever kind of game they want... but that we live in such an unbalanced world right now, we're not free to do that... there are so many games that aren't being made that speak to the richness of human diversity, and that makes me very sad. In a balanced world, you can have games with one-sided characters... it no longer stands out as the signature of the industry.

*I'm glad you mentioned the sexualized characters, which I was slightly hinting at in my last question, because, to be honest, Lara Croft, Lightning, and Nilin all are pretty*

*obviously designed to catch the eye of male gamers. Maybe not Nilin so much, I'm just commenting off of a few screens I've seen. Do you believe that the same statement with gender-based characters also applies for characters of different races and ethnicities in games? And do you feel it's a greater or lesser imbalance than female characters?*

I suppose it depends how you define "one-sided" character-- I'm thinking of it as personality traits, physical features... caricatures aren't inherently a bad thing, unless they promote hate and negativity... so in that sense we have to be exceptionally careful. I think that racism is a very real and very, very serious issue. I don't know that I want to pit racism against sexism in terms of what is worse... I've heard of horrible things in both cases, things that keep me up and night and have me cry myself to sleep. I want to promote a world that is tolerant, where we don't have to worry about such things because people are just fundamentally more accepting. I also don't want a world where people are so on edge that they interpret things immediately negatively, closing the door for dialogue and making real growth almost impossible. A more harmonious world is certainly more possible when we try to interpret folks as graciously as possible. One interesting consideration is that games, much like movies and stories, are often reflections of life or fictitious scenarios... if a character, for example, behaves in a certain manner that might be considered sexist or racist in a movie, we don't tend to demonize the movie, assuming it's not promoting that as a way of life.. so there's a certain freedom of expression and creativity that is there that we want to keep in mind. So the waters are deep and complex and hard to navigate, especially when we look at the comparatively young life of the video game so far, and the evidently immaturity of at least some of the population who are playing and making games right now. (I don't want to paint everyone with the same brush... in fact, that's exactly what I'm not saying and this past weekend was how I tried to prove that point-- most of us, male and female alike, AREN'T that way).

*What is iamagamer's next move?*

Kimberly: I really want to keep pushing this message



and getting the games that have been made out there and in front of as many eyeballs as possible-- I want to celebrate everyone's hard work and messages as much as I can. Beyond that, though, I want to look at doing more game jams for social change. Likely we'll do another gender-based one, but there is so much need for increased representation and diversification that there are lots of other jams to hold, too. I'd like to do one with the Ouya where we spend the weekend filling Ouyas with games we make and then donating them to underprivileged families, for example, or a jam creating new content for One Laptop Per Child, as well as other issues... exploring things like that. I'm female, and a programmer, gamer and educator, so the gender one was something that was near and dear to my heart, but I want to help others have a voice, too. I really want to keep pushing this message and getting the games that have been made out there and in front of as many eyeballs as possible-- I want to celebrate everyone's hard work and messages as much as I can. Beyond that, though, I want to look at doing more game jams for social change. Likely we'll do another gender-based one, but there is so much need for increased representation and diversification that there are lots of other jams to hold, too. I'd like to do one with the Ouya where we spend the weekend filling Ouyas with games we make and then donating them to underprivileged families, for example, or a jam creating new content for One Laptop Per Child, as well as other issues... exploring things like that. I'm female, and a programmer, gamer and educator, so the gender one was something that was near and dear to my heart, but I want to help others have a voice, too.

*How much of an impact did having sites like IndieGames.com and Gamasutra promote the jam have?*

I think it made a big impact... our traffic increased quite a bit, and we had a lot of folks reaching out from all over the globe wanting to be a part, and just cheering us on. That included sponsors, too, which made a huge difference... I was able to feed the jammers and get some great t-shirts so we could promote the message beyond the jam and through a unique t-shirt design that was very popular.

*How many games were made in total for the jam onsite? And do you have any numbers for offsite games?*

Kimberly: We have 64 games that have been submitted as of right now and more coming in as we speak. I don't have the final count yet for the offsite folks, but we had

158 in Vancouver and about another 100 outside of Vancouver

*So quite a few! Have any favorites out of what's come in so far?*

Oh man, so many awesome ones... we had a bunch demoed Sunday night after the jam and I'm slowly working my way through... some favourites include Wolny, which deals with being heard in a really creative fashion... you're running past Russian soldiers and you only speak a bit of Russian, so you're only able to get part of the messages, etc. The art is beautiful... hard to believe it was done in 48 hours. [Tiny Wings] has a baby being projectile borne and then a la endless runner, you have to keep flying and picking up things that make for a great life and avoiding things that will hold you back. Another took a meta look at the industry, and starts with a script being rejected on the basis of a strong female lead, and the character being replaced with a stereotypical male character... the discarded version of the script sees the female character jump off the pages and into the game, eventually battling that male character as the final boss.

*I'm looking at some of these games and they look pretty great for jam games, especially the unique art style in Wolny.*

Kimberly: I know, eh? I'm so impressed by what I've seen so far.

*What other jams have you helped organized/taken a part in?*

Kimberly: I've been running Vancouver global game jam for years now... we have the largest site in the world (some have a few more participants, but no location has them all in one room like we do. I've done tonnes of smaller ones, too, and more general hackathons.

*What made you interested in helping out with the Vancouver GGJ?*

Kimberly: I was approached a long time ago as someone who loved games and was passionate about the industry... as soon as I heard what it was, I was like "OMG YES!" The first Vancouver site I organized had 25 people... this year we we had just shy of 300.

*That's how many people Ludum Dare used to have WORLDWIDE! Congrats on that!*

Kimberly: Haha... isn't that crazy? Thanks! Vancouver is hungry to make games.

*I hope they don't get full any time soon!*

Kimberly: Haha, ME EITHER!

*As for your own games, how often do you start your own projects and are you working on any at the moment?*

Kimberly: I don't have anywhere near as much time as I wish I did to make games... I'm always designing games, but I only occasionally get to work on them. I have a game I'm trying to finish right now for the iPhone, and another iPhone game currently paused while we deal with some ip issues. And I've got a company on the side that makes health-training apps and games. I did the art for one of the games at the jam just recently, too, as a departure from my normal life as a designer/programmer.

*Any chance you could tell us a bit more about the iPhone game?*

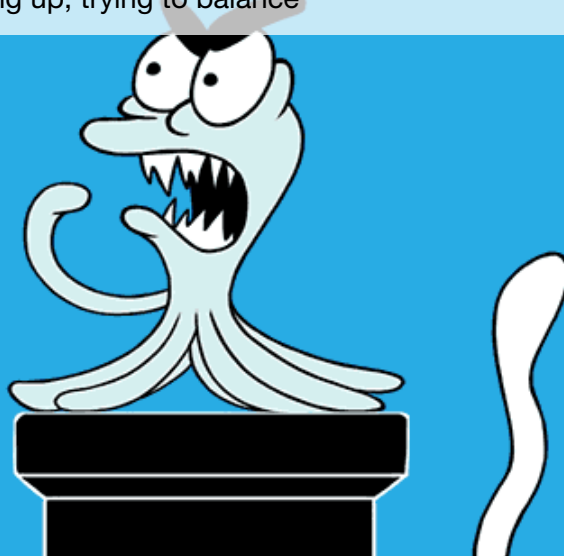
Kimberly: Both games are endless runner style games... one I can't say anything more about, haha! But the other you play as a plant growing up, trying to balance

the sunlight and water you get as you climb higher and higher. It should be done shortly! I joined a talented team on that game late, so they get all the kudos, I think. I have a couple other games that are all mine that I'm working on... one is a personal-journey type story... highly abstracted and realized as a platformer. It's still pretty rough, though, but I've scripted out large parts of it. I hope to finish it in the fall when things are a bit more calm. I'm very lucky to teach at an institution where I get to help folks with their games all the time, which is pretty awesome, I have to say.

*Definitely keep us up to date with the games, they all sound interesting from what you've told us. As for being a teacher, that is pretty awesome. There's an undescrivable joy that's present when you make your first game/program on a computer, and being able to help others achieve that joy is unlike anything else in the world. Thanks for joining me today to participate in the interview, it was fantastic hearing what you had to say and finding out more about the imbalance in the games industry.*

Kimberly: Thanks, Bret! Was great to talk to you :) Thank you for your support and for the opportunity!

*No problem, great events like this deserve attention.*



*FIND OUT MORE ABOUT KIMBERLY*

**Blog:** <http://zanytomato.tumblr.com/>

**Twitter:** @zanytomato

*FIND OUT MORE ABOUT IAMAGAMER*

**Site:** <http://www.iamagamer.com>

**Submissions:** <http://jam.iamagamer.ca/submissions>



# CRYPT OF THE NECRODANCER

**Platforms** PC / Mac **Genre** Roguelike / Rhythm **Developer** Brace Yourself Games **Release Date** Late 2013

Mash-up games are almost always fantastic. Ninjammin' Beat Jitsu combined platforming and rhythm, Sake Express combined shmups and fighters, and now, Crypt of the NecroDancer combines roguelikes with rhythm. Players have to move to the beat, earning combos by destroying enemies to gather more loot, to upgrade the character to delve deeper into the dungeons within the game.

This genius mash-up can be played using either a keyboard, gamepad or a DDR pad (yes, that does stand for Dance Dance Revolution) to navigate and destroy enemies. Each stage is different, using both random generation and music with a different beat to ensure no two playthroughs are ever the same. Players can even upload their own music to the game to raid the dungeons while jamming out to what they truly love. But is it fun?

Well.... YES. It's a delightful experience that, even in alpha stages, doesn't get stale very easily. Smashing through walls to uncover hidden chests, collect diamonds, and kill the wide variety of creatures hidden within is a task that never feels like work, but can sooth you almost too much to the point where you forget that you need to keep the beat. The bottom of the screen has a beat meter, to help you time your moves and attacks. Oh yeah, attacking literally just requires the player to

move in the direction of the attack. The entire game revolves around the same four buttons, which is simple to pick up, but a challenge to master.

Each enemy has different attacks, but once you learn how they move and attack, it becomes simpler to react properly. Certain enemy types require you to act differently, such as turn away from them (ghasts) before attacking. Moving through water is another strange obstacle, making the player's next action make the water go away instead of moving the player. Once a shovel is found, players can also dig through dirt walls, unlocking new areas throughout the dungeons, including hidden stores that sell items such as torches, new weapons, and lovely armor to keep you from getting

demolished by the monsters of the deep.

All of the small little details total up pretty quickly to help shape the fantastic experience that is Crypt of the NecroDancer. Let's dive a little bit deeper and talk about all the little systems that are in the game so far. On the "main world," which is a hub to explore different stages in the game, including the tutorial, there are also many rooms that branch off, three of which can already be accessed through the use of keys, found in the dungeons below. These rooms hold upgrades which can be bought using diamonds (also found in dungeons), which vary from spells to more health to weapons. There are approximately ten rooms which are



currently empty, meaning the game still has a lot of space for expansion. Even a mini-boss exists right now, which is a green dragon (shown to the right), who happens to be guarding a man in a cage. Saving this man unlocks a new room on the hub world.

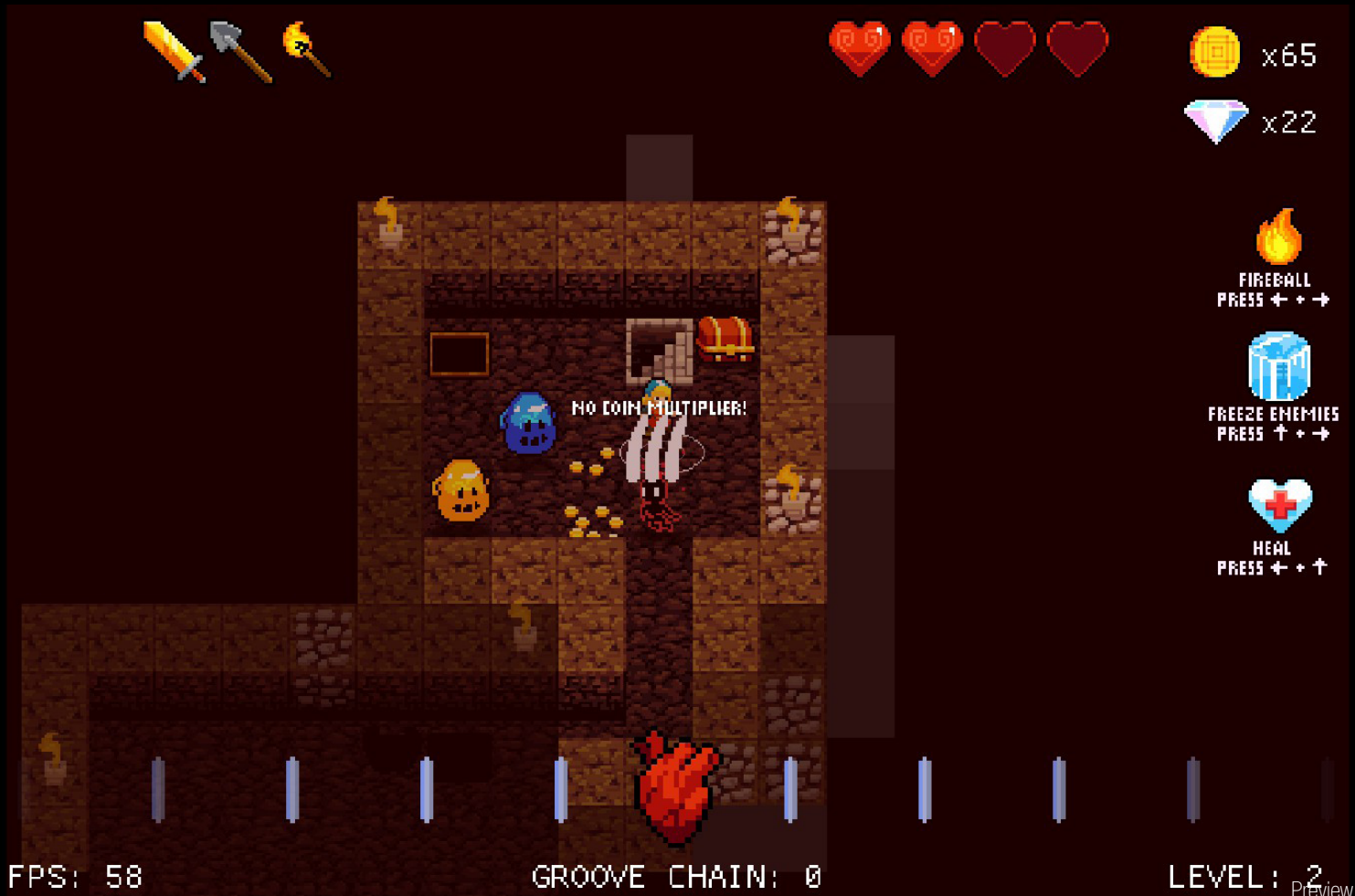
Ryan Clark, the developer behind the game, let me know that there's currently a debug console available in the alpha. This allowed me to test out the dozen weapons that are currently available, including swords, daggers, bows, and my favorite, the whip. Each type of weapon has at least one variation, usually a golden version of the weapon, as can be seen in the screenshot below. Each weapon attacks slightly different, hitting different areas and amounts of enemies, giving it an almost chess feel. The constant movement forced by the beat of the music pushes the player to quickly scan the surroundings and react accordingly, while the other creatures make moves as well. Holding your place for two

beats in a row will destroy your combo, reducing the amount of loot you receive and making the cool graphical effects go poof until you slay another creature.

Ryan Clark was pretty lucky to know some people around the indie community, as the game's assets are coming from some fantastic names in the indie games world. Ryan quickly met Ted Martins to do the mesmerizing artwork for the game, who was roommates with Evan Balster, the man who's now behind the audio portion of the code. Who's doing the music? Ryan reached out to award winning composer Alec Holowka, who joined the team along with Danny Baranowsky. The two of them have provided some phenomenal tunes for the game. Kevin Regamey, winner of the GDC 2013 Super Hexagon tournament



(that's quite an achievement), joined the game to play test and make sure the game's difficulty is just right, as well as provide sound effects that mesh perfectly with the music. With this marvelous team, Crypt of the NecroDancer just might have enough funk and groove to dance its way to the top of the charts. ■





# Back these games on Kickstarter and IndieGoGo!

*Click Greenlight, IndieGoGo, and Kickstarter images to go the corresponding pages!*



STEAM  
**GREENLIGHT™**



Fran Bow, an upcoming point and click adventure game, adds a sense of horror to the genre, telling the story of a little girl whose parents are murdered, and her mind afterwards. The duo, Killmonday (comprised of Natalia Figueroa and Isak Martinsson) has been

working on the game for a while, and have the first of five chapters complete. With the \$20,000 they're trying to raise, they'll be able to fund the sounds, music, animations, art, and code for the game, six months of bills and food so they can, well, you know, live, and then the rest of the money will be put towards the IndieGoGo perks!

STEAM  
**GREENLIGHT™ KICKSTARTER**

Dungeonmans is a 2D roguelike that evolves as you journey. With random generation, excellent character development, tons of loot, and a wide variety of unique enemies can be found within this throwback to early video games. Currently sitting at \$21.5k of their \$35,000 goal with 13 days to go, Dungeonmans has a very good chance in succeeding. A demo of the game is available through their Kickstarter page.



Zak Ayles has been going crazy after reaching his goal of \$7k in 3 days on Kickstarter. The experimental adventure hopes to reinvent the adventure genre through new storytelling, focusing on “social interactions, life, and narrative,” telling the non-linear story of seven people who mysteriously disappeared by taking the role of Eggert Kirby, a freelance journalist who's out to find out where they are. Along with Zak, Phillip Lanzbom is working on bringing the perfect sound to the game, making sure it's perfectly balanced to provide the best experience. That's not all, though - 7 brand new games are being made for the Kickstarter by members of Braingale, such as Andrew Brophy, Todd Luke, and Jerry Mickle, which can only be obtained through contributing to the Lioness crowdfunding campaign. Check it out!



**KICKSTARTER**

# REVIEWS

Before we get into checking out some of the best games of the last month, we should probably see what exactly each rating means. Our scale's pretty similar to most rating scales, but it never hurts to take a peak at how exactly we grade each game.



## **10 - Masterpiece**

These games are the indie gems. They show great innovation, are executed perfectly, and are games that you *have* to pick up.

## **9 - Exceptional**

Nine's are almost what tens are, just they aren't quite there. They're still super entertaining, and provide hours upon hours of fun. They are those indie games that stick out, but don't always stick around. You should consider picking up one of these titles.

## **8 - Wonderful**

This game is better than great, it's wonderful!

It possibly shows for some major potential, but doesn't quite achieve it. Otherwise it's a really fun game that isn't quite exceptional.

## **7 - Great**

These games are better than most of the games, and are fun for a few playthroughs. They don't quite have what it takes to be wonderful.

## **6 - Good**

Right above average! While these games are fun, they could use some more content, slightly better gameplay, or need an upgrade on visual/sound assets.

## **5 - Average**

Eh, your game's alright, but just hardly stands out in the huge array of indie games available on the internet.

## **4 - Okay**

We've seen better, and hope you'll keep working at it.

## **3 - Bad**

Honestly, hitting the ESC button and watching the desktop come back was more fun than your game.



## **2 - Horrible**

This game sucks pretty hardcore. Did you even put effort into this?

## **1 - Why would you even release this?**

No. Just no.

Ratings 4 through 1 are pretty harsh, and we most likely won't be reviewing any games with that low of a rating. We won't even review 5's, because we want to let you know about the best indie games out there. And, well, here they are:





THE WORLD OF TOKI TORI 2+ IS SOMETHING TO  
*SING ABOUT*



The logo for Toki Tori 2+ is displayed in a stylized, 3D font. The words 'TOKI' and 'TORI' are stacked vertically in a bright orange color. Below them, the number '2+' is enclosed within a green circular emblem that resembles a gem or a coin, which is itself set against a dark orange background. The entire logo has a slightly distressed, hand-drawn aesthetic.

# TOKI TORI 2+

## DEVELOPER

Two Tribes

## PLATFORMS

Windows - Mac - Wii U

## GENRE

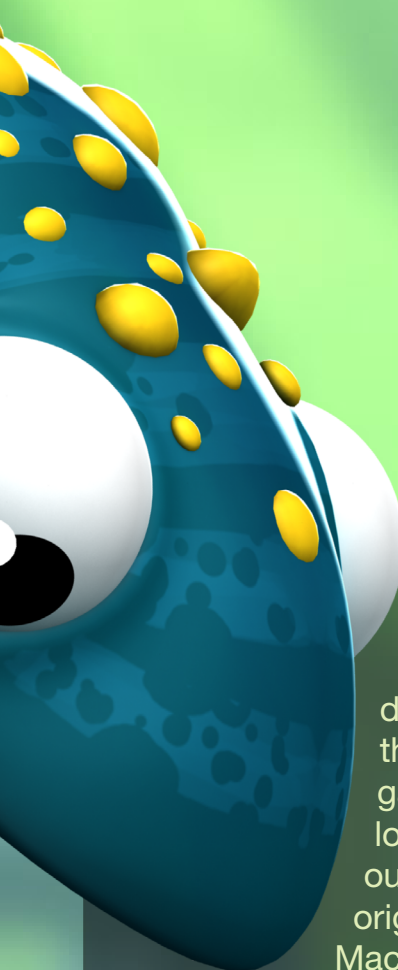
Platformer / Puzzle

## PRICE

\$14.99 / €13.99 / £12.99

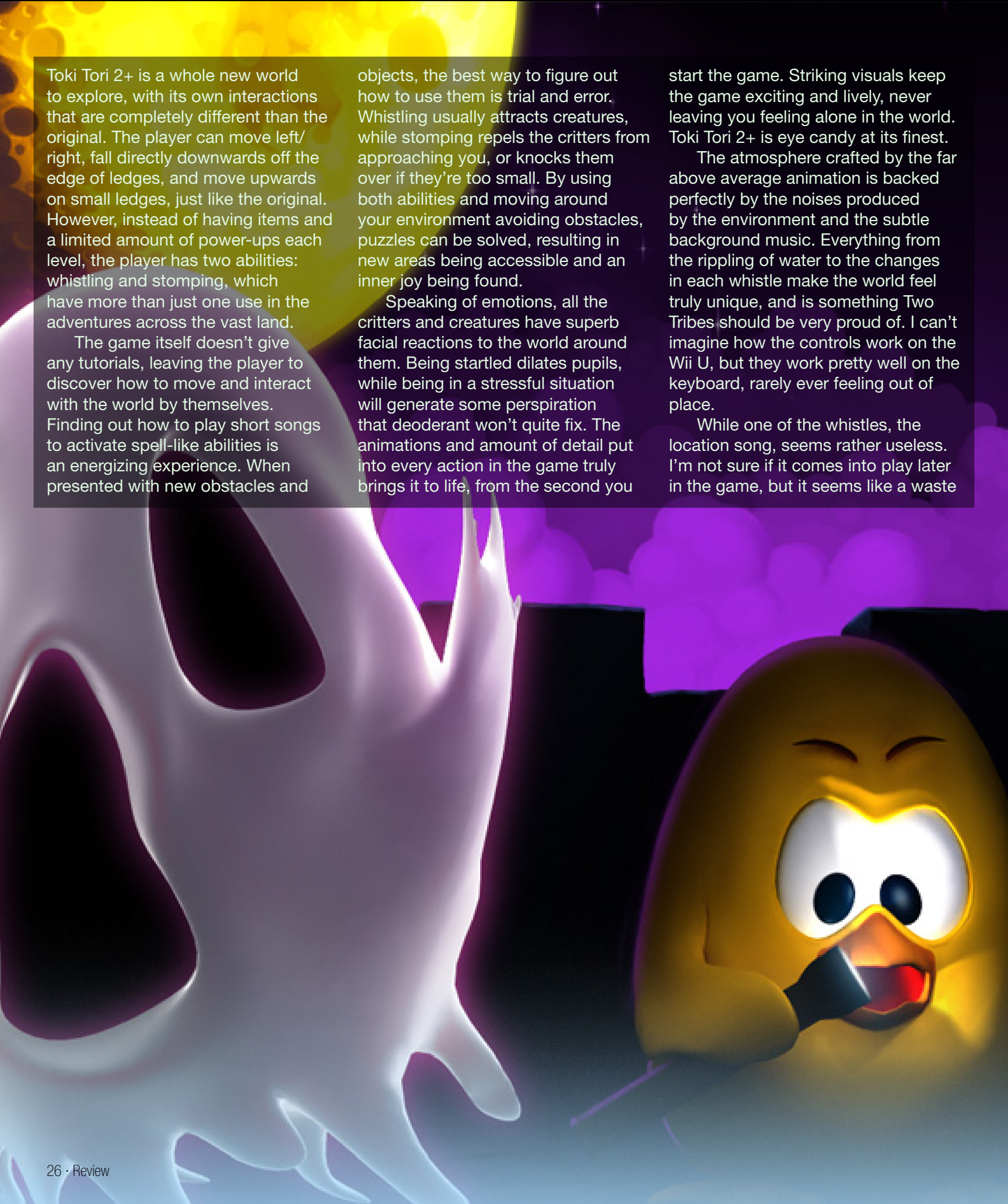
## RELEASE DATE

July 11

A close-up of a blue, bird-like creature with large, white, circular eyes and a beak. It has yellow spots on its head and back. The creature is looking towards the right.

Most sequels are out in a few years, and build off of the concepts of the original. Two Tribes decided to take a slightly different route - take the world of Toki Tori and transform it, making the game feel completely fresh and new. It's been a long time since the original Toki Tori, which came out in 2001 for the GameBoy Color. However, the original game has had many ports, including PC, Mac, Linux, iOS, Android, Wii, and the PlayStation Network. Toki Tori 2 came out for Wii U on April 4th, 2013, but was re-released just this month for computers with even more content.

Toki Tori 2+ builds off the original puzzle concepts founded in the first game, but changes how you interact with the world. Instead of modifying the world and teleporting yourself around, this time around you whistle out to attract creatures to aid you in puzzles, as well as scare and pound things away. These simple concepts are all it takes to create a gorgeous sequel that's even more intriguing than the original game. Well, what are you waiting for? Let's fly off into the world of **Toki Tori 2+**.



Toki Tori 2+ is a whole new world to explore, with its own interactions that are completely different than the original. The player can move left/right, fall directly downwards off the edge of ledges, and move upwards on small ledges, just like the original. However, instead of having items and a limited amount of power-ups each level, the player has two abilities: whistling and stomping, which have more than just one use in the adventures across the vast land.

The game itself doesn't give any tutorials, leaving the player to discover how to move and interact with the world by themselves. Finding out how to play short songs to activate spell-like abilities is an energizing experience. When presented with new obstacles and

objects, the best way to figure out how to use them is trial and error. Whistling usually attracts creatures, while stomping repels the critters from approaching you, or knocks them over if they're too small. By using both abilities and moving around your environment avoiding obstacles, puzzles can be solved, resulting in new areas being accessible and an inner joy being found.

Speaking of emotions, all the critters and creatures have superb facial reactions to the world around them. Being startled dilates pupils, while being in a stressful situation will generate some perspiration that deoderant won't quite fix. The animations and amount of detail put into every action in the game truly brings it to life, from the second you

start the game. Striking visuals keep the game exciting and lively, never leaving you feeling alone in the world. Toki Tori 2+ is eye candy at its finest.

The atmosphere crafted by the far above average animation is backed perfectly by the noises produced by the environment and the subtle background music. Everything from the rippling of water to the changes in each whistle make the world feel truly unique, and is something Two Tribes should be very proud of. I can't imagine how the controls work on the Wii U, but they work pretty well on the keyboard, rarely ever feeling out of place.

While one of the whistles, the location song, seems rather useless. I'm not sure if it comes into play later in the game, but it seems like a waste



# THE VERDICT

## Innovation

Completely reinvents the Toki Tori system, staying true to its roots while adding a whole new way to play.

## Execution

The game lives up to its predecessor and has some super well designed puzzles. Everything in the game feels polished to the max, and doesn't skip a beat anywhere along the journey.



of knowledge, memorizing a fifth whistle that doesn't really do anything other than show your location on the map (which you could find out by going to a save point and calling a flying bird to bring you to the skies.

The puzzles do get more challenging as the game goes on, but they're still solvable, even if it takes a few tries to figure out how to go about getting from point A to point B. Sadly, some of the puzzles feel more like perfectly positioning the critters, which can move on their own, and hoping that they react at the right time rather than prematurely. This makes it a little more luck based, but adds that little extra dash of difficulty to frustrate the player until they get it right.

Two Tribes' creativity shines through the game, taking the same two abilities and the same types of critters and keeps finding new ways to use them in the adventure. You've

## Gameplay

The way Toki Tori works with movement takes a little getting used to, but once it's down, it's like riding a bike. Smooth, responsive controls keep the game alive.

## Graphics

The game has a unique 3D art style that will leave you breathless, often sitting in your chair admiring the view.

## Audio

The music fits so well into the game, you often won't even notice it's there.

## Lifespan

The world is rather large, allowing for a lengthy playthrough. Replay value is moderately high.

## Overall

Toki Tori 2+ deserves the +, because it is truly a phenomenal game, both capturing the imagination and sending you soaring.

## Score

9.5/10



used a frog a million times before to help yourself get to a higher place, but what if you made a critter go to a higher place? Or even another bloated frog? Using the critters in different combinations to create new puzzles is fantastic, and something Two Tribes has done all too well.

Toki Tori 2+'s no tutorial or help allows the player to feel smart and like they know how to figure things out, but also presents the problem of not always knowing how to get across certain areas, such as a long stretch of water that the player will drown in. Thankfully, a special little bird comes along and sings a special song, which, if repeated, rewinds time to the last checkpoint you touched.

Now, is this a game you should check out? Absolutely. The first game was cool, but nothing spectacular, and hardly shows through the thrilling advances and changes in the sequel. Whether or not you're a bird person, the

whistles and songs of this little bird are some to listen to, and will remain in your heart far after you've finished exploring the magnificent world of Toki Tori 2+.

Two Tribes is a small independent game studio from The Netherlands, dating back to 2000. They've worked on and contributed to games such as EDGE, Swords & Soldiers, Swap This!, Frenzic, RUSH, and Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs. Check out their gorgeous site at [www.twotribes.com](http://www.twotribes.com).



# UNEPIIC

*An Epicly Ironic Title For A Game That's Epically... Epic... Yeah*



**Price** \$7.99/€6.99/£5.99 **Platforms** PC **Genre** Action RPG **Developer** Francisco Téllez de Meneses **Release Date** June 13

## Innovation

Takes the best of RPG games and meshes them with an action platformer styled game to create a unique experience.

## Execution

UnEpic's idea is brought together with great gameplay, but killed a bit with clunky user-interference.

## Gameplay

Other than some awkward jumping physics, the game is always smooth and feels great.

## Graphics

Stylish and attractive without distracting the player from the game itself.

## Audio

Exciting tunes and attack noises make the experience all the more fun.

## Lifespan

Even if you get sick of the expansive single player mode, multiplayer has you backed up.

## Score

8.5/10

**UnEpic** is the tale of an average guy playing an board game RPG with his friends, until the unfateful night where he had to go to the bathroom. After average Daniel finishes the break, the lights go out, the toilet disappears, and the young man soon finds out he's in a dungeon, only to be become possessed by a demon. Whether or not his friends put some LSD in his drink or not, the experience feels super real to Daniel, and he quickly finds out he needs to destroy the ruler of the castle while dealing with one of the ruler's minions trapped inside his body.

However, you, the player, get to control Daniel in his **UnEpic** adventure, fighting goblins, finding spells, leveling up, and lighting up the unknown areas ahead in a quest to fight the castle's ruler. When first introduced to the game, the full user interface is available, and is super overwhelming. Thankfully, after the tutorial and an hour or two of adventuring, the immense system starts to feel much

more simple and becomes a breeze to navigate around.

This platforming, action RPG has simple controls: arrow keys to navigate and space to attack. The game's been in development for nearly 4 years, and over that time there's been countless weapons with even more variations added to the game, with spells upon spells to learn. Weapons are able to be hot-linked to keys, allowing for quick swapping between weapons, which is used quite often throughout the game. Certain enemies are easier to kill with certain weapons, while it's safer at times to go long range and take a creature out with a good old fashioned bow and arrow.

UnEpic has everything you'd expect from an RPG - shops, upgradable skills, a large assortment of weapons, spells, armor, and accessories, and mini-quests to help gain experience and collect special items. I've already put in well over 5 hours and have only seen a fraction of





what the game has to offer, with tons of boss fights and secret areas to explore.

The underlying story is a bit interesting, and the character is always pulling jokes and pretending to be someone he's not (because he's role playing... in real life). The amount of references and quotes from popular movies, games, and TV shows is great, as almost every conversation has the main player quoting someone like Obi-Wan Kenobi. Even some of the characters you meet along the journey remind you of characters you love. This could be a sign that it is just Daniel's imagination running wild, or that the

	level	damage	critical	speed	Features:
Daggers:	1	+70	11%	-	Level: 18
Swords:	1	+90	6%	-	Damage: 205
Maces:	14	+145	17%	5%	Critical: 27
Axes:	1	+70	5%	-	Health: 512
Polearms:	13	+140	15%	-	Health Max: 850
Bows:	12	+55	27%	20%	Exp: 148344
Staves:	1	-	1%	-	Exp max: 216061
Wands:	1	-	-	-	
Constitution:	18				Protection:
Potions:	9				Melee: 100
Armor:	18				Projectiles: 100
Robes:	1				Fire: 20%
Fire:	10	+60%	10%	-	Frost: 20%
Frost:	1	-	1%	-	Arcane: 4%
Arcane:	1	-	1%	-	Shadows: 4%
Light:	1	-	1%	-	
Protection:	1	-	-	-	
Healing:	1	-	1%	-	
Alteration:	1	-	1%	-	
Mental:	3	-	-	-	

real world houses characters far too similar to what the storytellers have come up with.

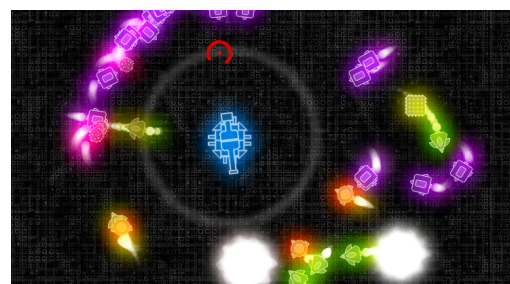
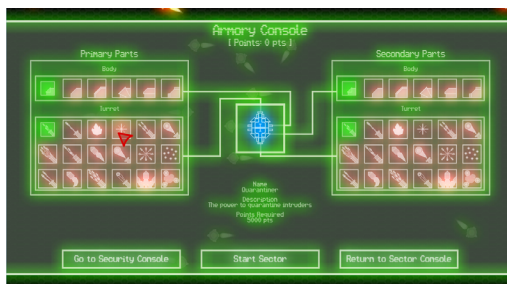
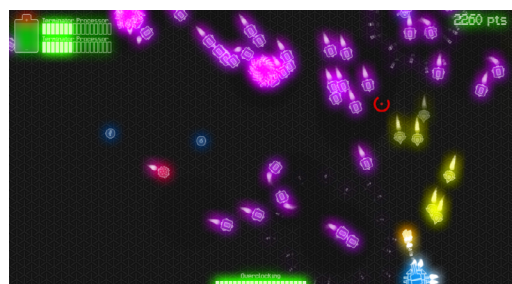
UnEpic is actually pretty epic, quickly showing that there was nearly 4 years of work put into it. The castle is ginormous, housing locked areas to explore as you get closer to completing your goal. So what are you waiting for? Start your UnEpic quest today! ■





# CLEAN 'EM UP

*Overheating goodness from the inside of a hard drive*



**Price** \$3.99/€3.99/£2.99 **Platforms** PC **Genre** Shmup **Developer** Omidos Entertainment **Release Date** June 22, 2012

## Innovation

Double sided vehicle and intriguing enemy types separates Clean 'Em Up from other shmups on the market.

## Execution

Great concept, however, back gun doesn't feel super useful.

## Gameplay

Super engaging. Time flies by while playing.

## Graphics

Simple, bright, and energizing.

## Audio

Fantastic soundtrack - quite possibly my favorite part of the game.

## Lifespan

The game has tons of different modes and increasingly difficult levels, providing hours upon hours of entertainment.

## Overall

Clean 'Em Up is a great addition to the shmups market, but doesn't stand out.

**Score**  
7.0/10

**Clean 'Em Up** is a shmup featuring bright colors, relentless enemies, and a computerized system. Players can upgrade their character with new guns that can overheat like a computer and bodies that each have a unique "overclock" ability. Shooting up viruses in every direction is much more demanding than one might think, as the game quickly gets difficult after the first few levels.

Clean 'Em Up takes place in a virtual world inside of a computer, where you defend blue objects known as files from the viruses around. If viruses touch a file, you have about five seconds to save the file, or else it'll become yet another enemy to shoot down. Shooting is done using the mouse, shooting two different guns at once - one in the direction of the mouse and another in the opposite direction. Both guns can be changed to purchasable guns in the store.

The demo, which we played, has 15 stages, while the full game houses more than 70, with five different game modes.

What makes this game so exciting is the wide variety of enemy types and how different they all are, making you change your strategy every few seconds depending on what comes your way from which direction. However, it isn't for unexperienced shmup players, and definitely requires some skill I lack in the genre. Thankfully, it didn't prevent me from playing the game, but did occasionally discourage me, with me dying about 5 seconds into certain stages across the game. 18 weapons and 20 achievements are awaiting for you to unlock them, so head over to the Clean 'Em Up site and get rid of all the viruses clogging up your hard drive. ■

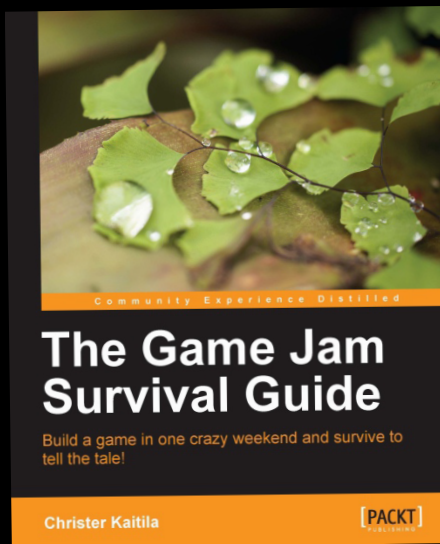
STEAM  
**GREENLIGHT™**



# *This Month's Giveaway*

Indie Power Magazine is giving away some free games each issue, which are always going to be found about mid-magazine. This month we're giving away a copy of *The Game Jam Survival Guide*, a lovely book we reviewed earlier this issue. So, how exactly do you win said book? Twitter is where it's at! All you need to do to enter is retweet a tweet from @indieFunction that's about the magazine (we'll be putting a multitude of them

out, so don't worry about searching for them too much), and then sending us a tweet with the corresponding hashtags found below. You can put multiple hashtags in your tweet, and can tweet us your entry once a day. Any more and we'll consider disqualifying you! So, follow the simple rules and enjoy your chance at some copies of the following games:



## THE GAME JAM SURVIVAL GUIDE

Christer sent us a second copy of the book to giveaway in the magazine because he's just that awesome! To win a copy of **The Game Jam Survival Guide**, send us a tweet with the hashtag #powerjamming to enter into this giveaway.

We didn't have any games to giveaway this issue, but will definitely have some for the following issues. This magazine was a bit rushed, and sadly doesn't quite live up to the expectations we had hoped, but we will redeem ourselves with Issue #2 (which is technically the third issue) with the same length as the beta issue. We sacrificed some of the content to make sure we provided

We really hope you enjoyed this issue of Indie Power Magazine. It was created over a super stressful period of three weeks, and we're super glad to have a full month before the next issue is planned on releasing. We'd like to remind you one last time to send us feedback about the issue to [feedback@IndiePowerMag.com](mailto:feedback@IndiePowerMag.com). Until next time, make sure you check out more of indie(Function);'s products at [indieFunction.com](http://indieFunction.com).

